

Places to develop Democracy: Relevance of Relph' Concepts of Place for the History of Education

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- My interest in questions about place and identity was peaked in an academic context that was not usual for me.
- So to speak, I had no geographical consciousness in those days, when I met the Humanistic Geography and the connections between Cultural History and Geography*.
- The cultural turn
- The spatial turn
- The material turn

Inside Out/ Outside In (2018). Resource Package for the course Building Bridges in Teacher Education. Erasmus+ Project.

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c21123_a02a3f458596429dbb0ed80b23010325.pdf.

Professor Holger Hanke he introduced Edward Relph in the project. I especially want to thank him for that.

- As educators, we think, write, and talk a lot about what to teach and how students learn, but we seldom pay much attention to where teaching and learning take place.
- We know it happens in schools, in classrooms, labs, study halls, gymnasiums...
- But more often than not, **these places are invisible backdrops, taken for granted locations that are constructed as neutral spaces we fill in with our educational activities***.
- Historians of Education started to research in school and/or learning spaces since the 80s, but rarely about places: 724 place/1434 space

* Hutchison, David C. (2004). *A Natural History of Place in Education*. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

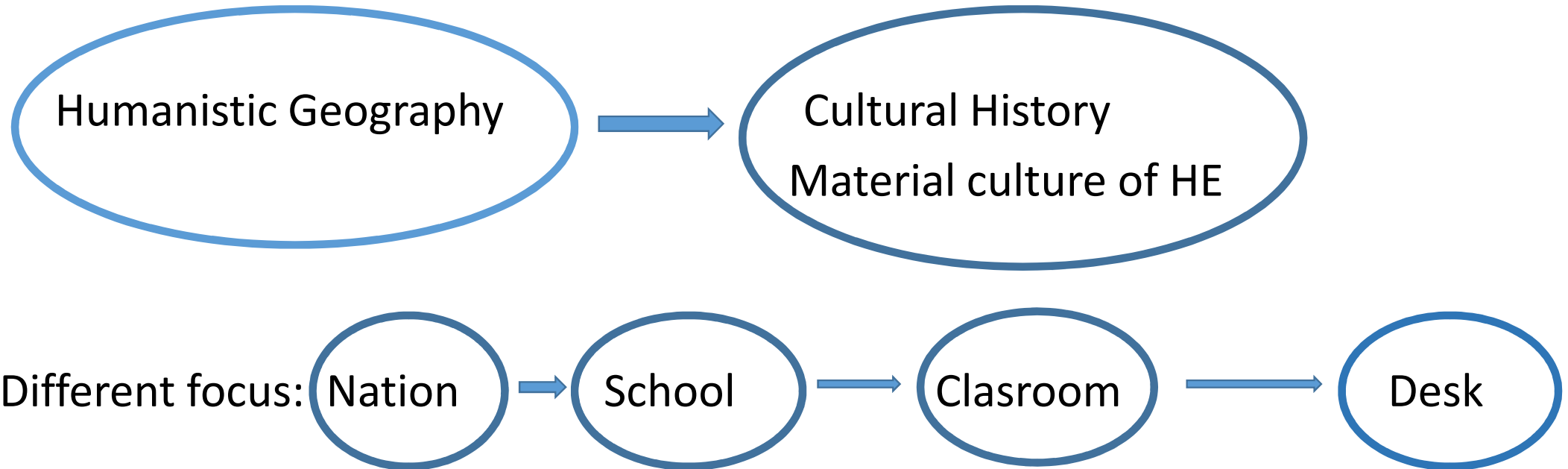
- “Astronomy has the heavens, **History has time, and Geography has place.** A major question that geographers must sooner or later ask, however, is “What exactly is place?” Is it merely a synonym for location, or a unique ensemble of **nature and culture**, or could it be **something more?**”

Seamon, D. and Sowers, J. (2008). In Hubbard, Ph., Kitchin, R. & Gill V. (2008). *Key Texts in Human Geograph*., London:SAGE, p. 43.

- History is about TIME and SPACE, History has time and space...
- How can we understand our emotional **attachment to a place? Again, what exactly does the term 'place' mean?**
- Humanistic geography offers the concept of insiderness and outsiderness to analyze this idea of **belonging** that is **reinforced at the school** .

Connecting

- Teaching and Research
- Concept of place:



Relph, Edward (1976): *Place and placelessness*. London: Pion. esp. chapter: "On the identity of places", pp. 44-62.

- This paper introduces the concept of “insideness” and “outsideness” developed by the humanistic geographer Edward Relph in his PhD thesis “Place and placelessness” published in 1976.
- Based on the distinction between the two epistemological categories of “space” and “place” used in geography, Relph introduces different types of “insideness” and “outsideness” to distinguish different degrees of emotional attachment of human beings to specific places.
- **The paradox of place and the evolution of placelessness**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gXqkq3zTzk>

Geography' and History's tradition as national disciplines*



<http://historiana.eu/sources/show/nation-states>

- **History and Geography of the nation state ...**
 - –political power
 - –the nation as an ideological construction
 - –ethnicities, language and culture
 - ...within a given (natural) territory
- **School History has served for the construction of national identities**
 - –by emphasizing the differences between “us” and “them” (culture, economy, language, landscapes,)
 - –“naturalizing” differences
 - –ordering the world (who and what belongs where...)

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https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c21123_a02a3f458596429dbb0ed80b23010325.pdf

Spaces/Artefacts are more than just material things

- They communicate ideas, symbolize values, and convey emotions. When we consider **meaning** and **value**, we are in the domain of **cultural history**.
- **Different spaces/artefacts mean different things to different people, and those meanings change over time.**
- **Same spaces → different identities**
- **Space becomes place when it is invested with meaning by those who spend time in it.**

- “A place is above all a territory of meanings. These meanings are created both by what one receives from and by what one gives to a particular environmental context”
- Relph, E.C. (1993). Modernity and the reclamation of place. In D. Seamon (Ed.), *Dwelling, seeing, and designing: Toward a phenomenological ecology* (pp. 25–40). New York: State University of New York Press. p. 36

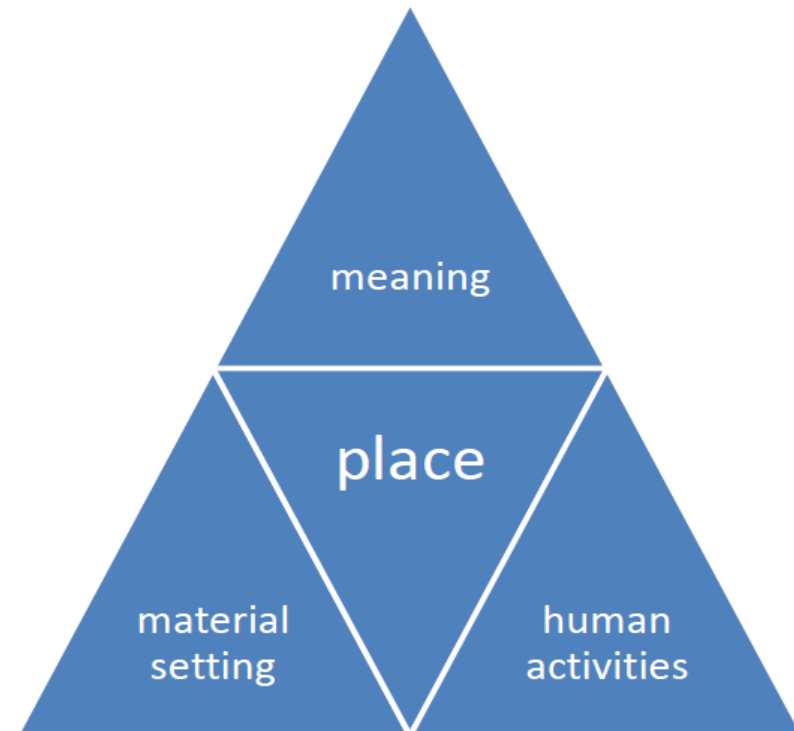
Edward Relph – Identity *of* places*

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https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c21123_a02a3f458596429dbb0ed80b23010325.pdf

- **identity *of* places**
- Every place is a unique combination of...
- 1. physical / **material setting**,
- 2. **human activities**, situations, and events and
- 3. the individual and group **meanings** created through people's experiences and intentions in regard to that place.
- ... at different scales
- ... with a certain persistence in time



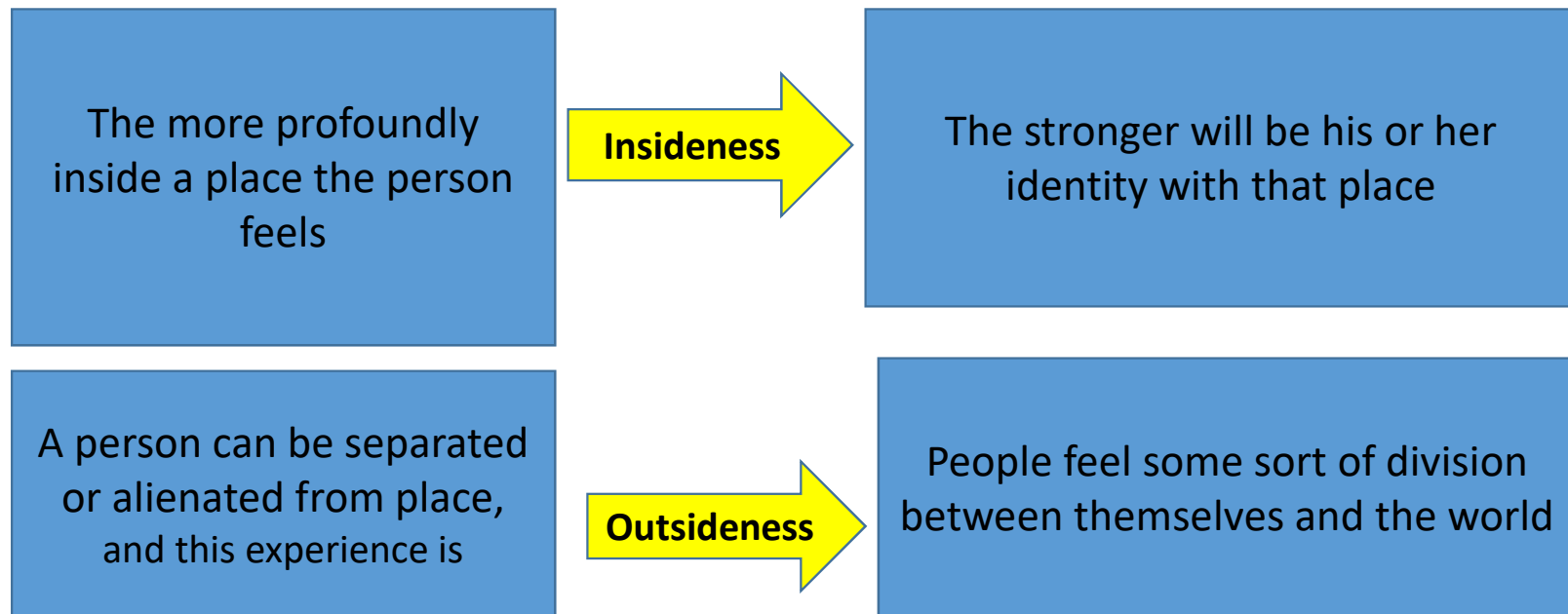
Edward Relph – Identity *with* places*

* Inside Out/ Outside In (2018). Resource Package for the course Building Bridges in Teacher Education. Erasmus+ Project.
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c21123_a02a3f458596429dbb0ed80b23010325.pdf

- **Insideness and outsideness**
 - individuals are emotionally and cognitively **attached to** or **involved in** places, but in different degrees of intensity
 - Relph proposes the terms *insideness* and *outsideness* to describe different modes of place experiences
- ***insideness – outsideness***
 - here – there
 - safe – threatened
 - enclosed – exposed
 - at ease – stressed

Identity *WITH* places

- If a person feels *inside* a place, he or she **is here** rather than *there*, **safe** rather than *threatened*, **enclosed** rather than *exposed*, at **ease** rather than *stressed*.



The crucial point is that, through different degrees of insiderness and outsidership, **different places take on different identities.**

Modes of *insideness* and *outsideness*: A taxonomy of insideness and outsideness as specific degrees of emotional experiences of places

- **Existential outsideness** – sense of unreality, of not belonging, uninvolved
- **Objective outsideness** – deliberate dispassionate attitude, geographers as spatial scientists
- **Incidental outsideness** – largely unselfconscious attitude of uninvolved; visitors, businessmen at meetings
- **Vicarious insideness** – „secondhand experience“ without visit, emotional involvement through the arts
- **Behavioural insideness** – being in a place, in a more cognitive, mode, predominantly visual experience
- **Empathetic insideness** – deliberate experience of a place with all senses
- **Existential insideness** – deep and complete identity, unreflected

Inside and outside



to look at school architectures

in different European countries, for example, the **border between the school campus and the outside has been constructed and controlled:**

in some schools, **not even a landmark** separating the school from its surroundings,

in others **walls and security controls** regulate who is going in and out.

[Bricks extension on walls due to security concerns in perception of expected terrorist attacks on schools in Karachi, at St Patrick's High School located on Saddar area in Karachi on Friday, March 11, 2016.](https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-bricks-extension-on-walls-due-to-security-concerns-in-perception-of-expected-terrorist-attacks-on-schools-in-Karachi-at-St-Patrick's-High-School-located-on-Saddar-area-in-Karachi-on-Friday-March-11-2016) Image ID: FM93Y9

<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-bricks-extension-on-walls-due-to-security-concerns-in-perception-of-98545645.html>



Madrid (Spain)

Insideness, outsidership, security, protection, higher and...?

[https:// www.elconfidencial.com/alma-corazon-vida/educacion/2018-10-20/patios-inclusivos-futbol-adios_1633102](https://www.elconfidencial.com/alma-corazon-vida/educacion/2018-10-20/patios-inclusivos-futbol-adios_1633102)



Tartu (Estonia)

Fotografías realizadas por Carmen Sanchidrián.
Archivo personal.



Annie Purl Elementary School (Texas)

Democracy, Insiderness, control, transparency,....?

[https://www.google.com/search?q=Annie+Purl+Elementary+School+\(Texas\)&client=firefox-b-d&channel=trow&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiw0I6Fxc3jAhWoDWMBHSWnA2sQ_AUIESgB&biw=1440&bih=725#imgrc=nm1HrhOz1OwfnM:](https://www.google.com/search?q=Annie+Purl+Elementary+School+(Texas)&client=firefox-b-d&channel=trow&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiw0I6Fxc3jAhWoDWMBHSWnA2sQ_AUIESgB&biw=1440&bih=725#imgrc=nm1HrhOz1OwfnM:)



- This is similar to the territorial dimension of the modern nation state— a politically constructed spatial entity that is surrounded by national borders.
- Based on legislations the practices of border control regulate who is allowed to come inside the national territory, and who is not. In these logics, national citizens belong to the defined territory, whereas foreigners are usually considered outsiders.



Fuente de las imágenes:

← <http://www.islandvulnerability.org/borders.html>

https://www.hispanidad.com/confidencial/mientras-espana-preve-quitir-las-concertinas-de-ceuta-marruecos-las-pone-en-una-nueva-alambrada_12008817_102.html



- From this perspective, the Relph's concept of *Place and Placelessness*, and his taxonomy of insiderness and outsiderness as specific degrees of emotional experiences of places ranging from existential insiderness –home– to existential outsiderness – a complete estrangement–, **offers a model that may be used to analyze the emotional attachment that the material school objects (from school buildings to classrooms, desks, textbooks, posters, uniforms, songs, among others) intended to develop.**
- The analysis of material artefacts used in the classroom reveals how a closed **nationalistic thinking** has been—and probably still is—**implemented in teaching and education**

- This implementation has been stronger during dictatorships and nationalistic periods, when **spaces were used to construct a national identity against the 'Other'** and texts and images were not truly designed to convey cognitive content to students, but to form their sentimental being and to develop their emotional attachment to some places.

- This is particularly relevant **today** when **education** is seen as a powerful force for building and ensure **democracy** that is seen as a multifaceted concept.
- **Democratic principles (human rights and acceptance of diversity as fundamental premises for democracy) do not come naturally; they need to be taught and they cannot be taken for granted.**

Teaching History has been strongly linked to the notions of Nation-State, Homeland, and Patriotism with different outcomes, and let's not forget that the modern Nation-state has a strong territorial dimension with outcomes that have been good and bad

- Constructing “history” for the exclusive nation, especially one which sets itself against its neighbours, is a dangerous force in the world.
- Constructing history for an inclusive and democratic nation that seeks understanding not only across its own components groups –but also of its neighbours- can clearly be a force for good.

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Thanks for your listening

ISCHE 41